(b) whether the foundry industry has requested for bank loans at concessional rates; and

(c) if so, the response of Government to these demands?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) Representations are received from time to time by Government from Foundry industry for lowering the import and excise duties on pig iron.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The issue of concessional finance and reduction/abolition of import and excise duties on raw-materials is reviewed from time to time taking into account relevant factors, such as revenue loss, manufacturing margins, international and indigenous prices.

Losses to NCCF

495. SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV:

SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred Question No. 2766 given in Rajya Sabha on 17th March, 1989 and state:

(a) what are the item-wise/transaction-wise/year-wise details of the losses which make a total of Rs. 903.09 lakhs;

(b) whether the total cummulative losses have now repeatedly gone up; if so, what are the latest figures of losses item-wise/transaction-wise/year-wise;

(c) whether 'minor penalty' earlier mentioned to be imposed on CAF in connection with the FCI supplies to Army purchases organisation have since been imposed on him; if so, when; if not, by when the same is likely to be imposed; and

(d) the reasons for which CAF is not suspended, like others, facing CBI inquiry and is allegedly involved in report and sale of dry dates which is currently under regular investigation by CBI?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) The NCCF have reported that they do not maintain item-wise/transaction-wise/ profit and loss account. The year-wise details of the total losses are as follows:—

Year	(Rs. in lakhs) Amount
1983-84	120.12
1984-85	254.34
1985-86	271.47
1986-87	257.36
	Total: 903.29

(b) NCCF have incurred a net loss of Rs. 185.47 lacs during 1987-88. The cummulative losses as on 30.6.88 have gone upto Rs. 1088.76 lacs.

(c) The proceedings are in progress and no time limit can be fixed for their finalisation.

(d) The officer was placed under suspension on 6.5.86 in connection with supply of pulses to FCI which was investigated by the CBI as stated in unstarred question No. 2766 answered on 17-3-89.

The suspension was revoked by the NCCF Management in May, 1988 as the CBI in its report in that case had not recommended any action against him. The CBI have not furnished any report so far to Government on the Import and Sale of Dry dates.

Enquiry against Patna Branch Manager of NCCF

496. SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV:

SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred Question No. 1224

given in Rajya Sabha on 3rd March, 1989 and state:

(a) whether the Vigilance investigations into the irregularities committed by Patna Branch Manager of NCCF in respect of purchase of potatoes and Masoor Chanti have since been completed; and

(b) if so, what are the findings of the Enquiry and what disciplinary action has been taken against the involved Branch Manager?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) and (b) NCCF have reported that Vigilance Investigations into the matter have been completed and action is under process.

Protest Against the increase in the import Duty

497. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Living Media (India) Pvt. Ltd., Anand Bazar Patrika Ltd. have protested against the increase in import duty on glazed newsprint by Rs. 3000/- per tonne;

(b) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Times of India dated the 4th March, 1989 to the effect that the President of the Indian Newspaper Society has stated that this step would weaken the press by severe financial pressure; make the periodicals prohibitively expensive; and compel the periodicals to increase their advertisement rates making them less competitive with Doordarshan who have recently raised their rates, thus driving away advertisers from magazines;

(c) the extent to which the price of glazed newsprint has been increased since June last; and

(d) whether the press is regarded as an integral part of the country's democratic framework and may not be allowed to weaken?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The price of glazed newsprint (exclusive of Customs Duty) which was Rs. 9,180/- in second quarter 1988 has since gone-up to Rs. 12,610 in second quarter of 1989.

(d) The Government fully appreciates the role of the press in a democratic polity and is committed to its balanced growth. The rate of customs duty on the glazed newsprint has been revised in the light of the recommendations of the Kelkar Committee on Newsprint Policy.

Advance to Farmers for their Foodgrains

498. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched a scheme under which a farmer can draw about 80 per cent advance of the value of foodgrains kept in his house and duly pledged to a bank just as in the case of a trader in a Mandi;

(b) if so, what are the details of the scheme, the districts where it has been started and what have been experiences of the farmers; and

(c) the districts proposed to be covered under the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A scheme called Produce (Marketing) Loan scheme has been introduced from December 1988 on a pilot basis in